



Restorative Justice

JANUARY 28TH, 2021

Purpose

Provide information on initiatives in other jurisdictions as a background for a discussion related to the Restorative Justice Topic of Interest

Restorative Justice Defined

Restorative Justice - the term and theory of restorative justice originates from the criminal justice field. In that context, restorative justice focuses on ways to repair harm caused by criminal behavior and seeks reconciliation between the offender, victim and larger community.

For the purposes of this presentation, the term restorative justice is being used to describe efforts to provide reparative responses to historically discriminatory practices and policies that have negatively impacted Mecklenburg County residents; primarily those who are African-American (and other minorities).

Asheville, NC – Resolution Supporting Community Reparations for Black Asheville

- Asheville's program is under development but began with a City Council Resolution in July 2020.
- No measures have yet been identified by Asheville; however, the goal is to create generational wealth and economic opportunities.
- No cash payments, but investments in housing, business ownership, career opportunities, education, employment, safety
- Nothing has been spent yet, but the resolution calls for the establishment of a "Community Reparations Commission"
- The City anticipates to dedicate \$1M for the program in FY22, but the final amount is not specified.



Evanston, IL – Reparations Fund

- Evanston's planning process began in June 2019.
- The City anticipates dedicating \$10M to the fund. So far \$100K has been collected.
- Tax revenue from sales of recreational cannabis and donations.
- Expenses will be in the form of Housing Assistance, Economic Development Programs, and Education Initiatives.
- Created partnerships with dispensaries and financial institutions.
- No measures or outcome goals have yet been identified by Evanston.



Reparations Resolutions & Taskforces

- Buncombe County, NC - Resolution passed August of 2020. County will appoint representatives to Asheville's Community Reparations Commission.
- Burlington, VT – City Council passed a resolution in August 2020 to create a year-long task force to study reparations.
- Chicago, IL- City Council subcommittee to look at the feasibility of reparations.
- Durham, NC – In 2018, formed a Racial Equity TaskForce (RETF). Recommendations were made on how to close the racial inequity gap. Task Force determined reparations to be outside the City's legal authority and fiscal feasibility.
- Providence, RI - Executive order signed in summer 2020 to determine the feasibility of reparations.
- Washington, DC - Taskforce to study the economic impact of slavery in the city in October of 2020.

Reparations Summary

- A few communities have adopted resolutions expressing intent
- Investments in programs not cash to individuals
- No funding spent
- Exploratory taskforce is a common approach

Boston, MA - Racial Equity Fund

- Established in 2020
- \$50M planned investment for the fund (funded through donations)
- Funds will go to non-profits supporting this work
- Purpose: “The mission of the Fund is to provide essential support, resources and thought leadership for uncovering and dismantling systemic racism and all of its various and insidious forms”
- Provide resources in the following areas:
 - Health Care Equity
 - Economic Empowerment
 - Youth Education, Empowerment, and Civic Engagement



Madison, WI – Equity in Community Engagement

City Utilized Neighborhood Response Teams (NRT) to better understand community needs

The NRT engages regularly with community leaders to better understand gaps in service level

Recommendations on equity investments made regularly to City leadership



Portland, OR – Equity in Housing

\$20M Housing program that prioritizes minorities who have historically been displaced by gentrification

In response to Portland's high gentrification in the North and Northeast Corridor

Program aims to

- Prevent displacement by assisting with home repair
- Creating new homeowners by providing loans and building affordable housing
- Providing affordable rental homes
- Acquire land for future development



Oakland, CA – Equity in Transportation

OakDOT- Equity-Focused Paving Plan

- Using public complaint was not equitable or fair
- 3 year \$100M plan to prioritize roads in underserved communities
- The impact of an expensive car repair is negative for all drivers, but for low-income families, it can be disastrous

Let's Bike Oakland

- Underserved communities were historically neglected in city planning
- Used geospatial analysis to identify Oakland's most vulnerable groups in terms of access to protected bike lanes, public safety, commute times, and road conditions.
- Worked with community organizations to reach underrepresented communities



King County, WA – Equity in Open Space

Invests in communities with lower incomes and in those that have historically lacked infrastructure investments

King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks launched Open Space Equity Cabinet

Cabinet recommended:

- Refine community engagement efforts to better reach low income and limited English-speaking residents
- Use metrics to guide where park funding is used



Seattle, WA – Equity Education

Established in 2015

Provided \$60K of funding for 6 non-profits

Strategies:

- Provide training to understand the causes and effects of racial inequity
- Provide training on Race Equity Tool to King County organizations to develop programs, policies, and budgets.
- Develop racial equity professionals
- Organized parent groups to address systemic racism in education



Mecklenburg County Actions on Equity

Investments since FY2020:

- \$3.25M to establish Small Business Revolving Loan Fund
- \$3M to address Food Insecurity
- \$2M to Reduce Racial Disparities in Health Care
- \$2M for Park investments in underserved communities
- \$400K for Census outreach in traditionally undercounted communities
- \$250K MWSBE program assessment
- \$580K in Community Service Grant programs aligned to reducing racial disparities

The County has created an organization-wide Equity Action Plan

County staff have participated in equity training facilitated by G.A.R.E. and the Office of Equity & Inclusion



Considerations for New Programs

- Counties in North Carolina may only fund activities that serve a public purpose, and activities must benefit the public generally.
- North Carolina is not a “home rule” state.
 - Only the General Assembly can empower local governments to act.
- Ongoing expenses will need to be supported by an ongoing revenue source.